



OUR TOWN

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS

DECEMBER 2019



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LOMA PRIETA EARTHQUAKE BY THE NUMBERS

6.9

Magnitude

63

Casualties

3,000

People injured

\$5 BILLION

Property damage

3-12K

People left homeless



Photos courtesy US Geological Society

Remembering the Loma Prieta Earthquake



On October 17, 1989, Los Altos Hills resident Bridget Morgan pulled into her driveway at exactly 5:04 pm. As she got out of her car, the ground rumbled beneath her feet. The concrete buckled and rolled, the garage door collapsed, her car shook violently, and in the back seat, her three-year old son started screaming. Bridget found herself on the opposite end of the driveway unsure how she got there, convinced the world was ending. When the shaking finally stopped, Bridget and her son were unharmed, but the damage to their home was severe. Everything that could break was broken, and structural damage rendered the house unsafe to live in. The earthquake lasted only fifteen seconds, but it would take years for the Morgans to recover and rebuild. [CONTINUED ON PAGE 2.]



Loma Prieta: The Aftermath

When the 6.9 magnitude earthquake hit the Bay Area on that October day, it was felt as far away as western Nevada and San Diego, and the aftermath revealed significant damage to our region. People around the country witnessed the earthquake while watching the opening to Game Three of the World Series between the Giants and the A's. Giants' pitcher Mike Krukow said it felt "like a 600-pound gopher going under your feet at 45 miles an hour."

The quake's damage was widespread: 63 people killed, 3,000 injured, and more than \$5 billion in damages. The

"[The Earthquake] felt like a 600-pound gopher going under your feet at 45 miles an hour."

most extensive destruction occurred in San Francisco and Oakland, where the collapse of the Cypress Street Viaduct killed 42 people.

The damage to Santa Clara County was not as devastating, although there was one casualty—a worker who fell from a tower at St. Joseph's Seminary in Los Altos. Many homes and businesses were severely damaged, especially those built before stricter building codes took effect. Los Altos Hills homes built directly over fault lines also suffered significant damage.

For many whose homes were destroyed, the experience was traumatic. Bridget Morgan and her daughter had been making applesauce earlier in the day—a long standing tradition in her family. The apples were cooling on the stove when the quake hit, and Bridget

Cover: Loma Prieta caused significant damage to Los Altos Hills residents, particularly those living above fault lines. Courtesy, Bridget & Doug Morgan and Mara & Bob Bronstone. Above: St. Joseph's Seminary in Mountain View was damaged beyond repair during the Loma Prieta earthquake. Courtesy, St. Joseph's College.

found the kitchen covered in apple-sauce when she went inside to assess the damage. It was one of the most vivid and upsetting memories she has of the experience. However, when the Morgans began designing their new kitchen, Bridget insisted on an apple theme. She did not want the experience of Loma Prieta to poison her love of the fruit, and purposefully set about reclaiming the joy apples had always brought into her home. It was her way of coping with this trauma and moving forward.

While driving home to Los Altos Hills, Duffy Price noticed that Hwy. 280 was remarkably quiet. Once she arrived home, however, she found the interior in complete shambles. The refrigerator on its side; the stove, collapsed; dishes flung from cupboards; paintings on the floor; sculptures thrown across the room; an entire collection of Waterford crystal in pieces; several hundred books scattered about the living room. Because the house was built on cut/fill, the north section collapsed several inches and had to be rebuilt.

The earthquake had one positive outcome: it brought neighbors together. When the shaking stopped, residents ran outside their damaged homes. In an atmosphere that Los Altos Hills resident Mara Bronstone describes as almost like a block party, people banded together to ensure everyone was safe. In some neighborhoods, residents shared food and gathered around battery-operated radios or televisions to watch the news. There was comfort in having survived the experience, knowing they weren't alone, and having others to rely on.

Mara Bronstone spent the night in her van, too frightened to sleep in the house. Over the next few years, she and Bridget Morgan, who didn't know each other well before the quake struck, grew close as they went through the same ordeal of rebuilding their homes. Together, they navigated building permits, geological investigations, and structural engineering reports. They remain close to this day, and credit Loma Prieta for their 30-year friendship.

CERTs to the Rescue

After a natural disaster, professional first responders are not able to answer calls for help as quickly as they normally do. That's when other helpers, such as the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), step up. CERTs are everyday people from the community who take an intensive 21-hour training course to learn first aid, search and rescue, evacuation techniques, and essential preparedness skills. They also attend regular practice drills throughout the year. When disaster strikes, CERTs spring into action, using their knowledge to check on neighborhoods, deliver first aid, help residents evacuate safely, relay information over ham radio, and be the help until first responders arrive.

Alice Sakamoto joined the Los Altos Hills CERT program several years

Below: The Los Altos Hills CERTs. Courtesy, Alice Sakamoto. Facing page, top: Los Altos Hills CERTs practice their skills to keep the community safe and resilient. Courtesy, Alice Sakamoto. Right: Kevin Bacon. Photograph by Jan Davis.





ago after taking a Personal Emergency Preparedness (PEP) class. The program taught her many practical skills, but its value went far beyond that. For Alice and many others, “CERT is community spirit in its purest form. Everyone involved is there to learn about safety, how to help others, and everyone is equal.” CERT brings people together to create stronger, closer, and safer communities.

Today, the program is led by LAHCFD General Manager J. Logan and retired SCCFD Captain Denise Gluhan.

Preparing for an Emergency

In California, acts of nature are inevitable. The San Andreas Fault, which runs through Santa Clara County, is particularly dangerous and could affect the stability of hillside homes in Los Altos Hills. However, there are many ways to prepare yourself and your loved ones before the next disaster. Start by gathering emergency supplies for your household and pets. Make sure you have enough food, water, and medication for five days. Then add other items you think you will need if you have to be out of your home for several days, such as extra clothes,

idea, as they can pass messages between family members when local phone calls aren't working.

Times of crisis often bring people closer together. However, don't wait until after a disaster to get to know your neighbors! Now is the time to meet others in your community and discuss how you can help each other during an emergency. Make plans to check on each other's homes, children, and pets to ensure that everyone is safe. You can also get CERT-trained or become an amateur radio operator. Preparedness is a team sport, and neighbors can help each other stay safe and recover from a disaster.

Finally, make sure you're signed up for local emergency notification alerts at www.nixle.com and www.alertscc.org. Alert SCC will make sure you're aware of fires, earthquakes, severe weather, or crime incidents in your area, and will also provide instructions during a disaster. Check reliable sources for additional preparedness information, such as the Town of Los Altos Hills and FEMA.

PET EMERGENCY BEST PRACTICES

Kevin Bacon, the Town Pig of Los Altos Hills, has an emergency preparedness plan in place. His caretakers have stored a 3-day supply of food and water, as well as Kevin's medical records and other documentation. He has a “buddy system” with neighbors who will check on him during a disaster and care for him if necessary. Kevin also has an evacuation plan with a truck able to take him to a livestock evacuation site.

Making sure your loved ones are safe during an emergency extends to your pets, too. Whether your family has a dog, cat, iguana, chicken, horse, or guinea pig, make sure to include them in your emergency preparations. Prepare a kit for each pet and have an evacuation plan in place. Many public shelters don't allow pets other than service animals, so look for alternative spaces, such as a friend's house or barn, or pet-friendly hotels where you can stay together.

Your pet's kit should include food, water, a leash or carrier, vaccination and medical records, medications in a waterproof container, written instructions on caring for your pet, and your pet's chip ID number. It's also important to include a photo of yourself with your pet in case you get separated and need to prove ownership.

Develop a buddy system with neighbors, friends, or relatives to make sure your pets are safe if you can't get home. Discuss your pet's needs, as well as your communications plan and emergency preparedness kit location.



The first CERT training began in Los Angeles in 1986, and was adopted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as a nationwide training program in 1993. The Los Altos Hills CERT program began in 2008, when the Los Altos Hills County Fire District (LAHCFD) hired retired Santa Clara County Fire Department (SCCFD) Battalion Chief Mike Sanders. With the help of several Los Altos Hills residents who had taken CERT training in 2002 with the Los Altos Police Department, Sanders built up a team of some 100 CERT-trained volunteers. Key leaders also completed the week-long volunteer Incident Command training at the National Guard base in San Luis Obispo.

toiletries, a solar charger, utility knife, matches, and other useful supplies.

You and your family should also have an evacuation plan and communication plan in place before disaster strikes. It is important that everyone in your family know at least two ways to leave your neighborhood safely in an evacuation, as roads may be blocked and a situation change rapidly. During an evacuation, you won't be able to take everything with you, so make sure you have a realistic list of items to carry if you need to leave in a hurry. Talk to your family now about how you'll communicate during a disaster, and where you will plan to meet if separated. Having contact information for an out-of-state friend or family member is a good

Dr. Amy Ellison is Exhibition Curator at the Los Altos History Museum. Ann Hepenstal is Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for the City of Los Altos. Diane Holcomb is Outreach Coordinator for the Los Altos History Museum.



Los Altos History Museum Exhibit

To mark the 30-year anniversary of the Loma Prieta earthquake, Los Altos History Museum's exhibition, “Our Community Prepares: Acts of Nature, Then and Now,” opened October 17, 2019, and runs through January 19, 2020. The exhibition tells stories of lives shaken and resilient communities coming together to rebuild after natural disasters. Visitors will have the chance to view historic photographs, listen to audio clips, and see footage of the wreckage. Kids can dress up like firefighters, police officers, or our favorite superhero, Ready Girl! Co-produced with the City of Los Altos, the exhibition and related programming also teach visitors how to take action now and get prepared for future disasters. The Museum, located at 51 S. San Antonio Road, is admission-free, open Thursdays-Sundays, noon – 4:00 pm. Visit losaltoshistory.org for more information or to volunteer or become a member.



Planning for the 2020 Town Picnic

On June 2, 2019, Los Altos Hills held its 22nd annual Town Picnic at Purissima Park. All town residents were invited to this free, fun-filled afternoon — the signature annual town event to bring all residents together. The picnic is supported by our tax dollars and organized by the town's Community Relations Committee (CRC). Close to 2,000 residents attended — almost a quarter of the town's population.

History of the Town Picnic

The first Town Picnic was held in 1998. Residents were invited to bring a picnic lunch; the town provided beverages, strawberries, ice cream sundaes, a band and a clown for entertainment. About 325 people attended that inaugural event. Starting with the second picnic in 1999, local firefighters provided barbecued chicken and hot dogs. Over the years, attendance and number of attractions grew steadily. By the sixth year, attendance exceeded 1,000 people. In the last decade attendance has been steady — between 1,500 to 2,000 residents.

The CRC varies entertainment and musical groups from year to year. Starting in 2005, inflatables and contest games with prizes were offered. Later-year attractions included Native American crafts and a large model train display operated by the Golden Gate Lionel Railroad



Club. The picnics also provide an opportunity for the various town committees and organizations to set up tables with information about their respective missions and volunteer opportunities. A classic car show, featuring many classic cars owned by town residents, was established in 2007.

The success of every Town Picnic would not be possible without the enthusiastic support of volunteers. Each year, dozens of residents volunteer a half hour or so of their time during the picnic, helping with registration, games, serving beverages and ice cream.

Committee Requests Resident Input

The committee is currently planning for the 2020 Town Picnic. To continue its commitment to making each picnic successively better, the CRC is requesting feedback from all residents — young and old. Please provide specific feedback about what types of events, entertainment, food, and music, you would like to see in 2020. What events or details should stay the same? Which should change or be improved? Please provide feedback before the end of December: via online (www.losaltoshills.ca.gov/townpicnic) or phone (650-947-2518). Note that email addresses will be held in confidence and not be published.

Roy Woolsey is chairman of the Los Altos Hills Community Relations Committee.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

PHOTOS: Future issues of Our Town will feature a section titled "Snap Shots" that showcase beauty shots of Los Altos Hills. Have you taken a photo that highlights the natural beauty of the town (vistas, pathways, trees, animals, etc) and like to share it with Our Town readers?

STORIES: Do you have expertise in a topic or passion that residents might enjoy learning about? We also welcome stories and recollections about the early years of Los Altos Hills.

PROFILES: We live among residents who have lived interesting lives or have had fascinating careers. Some have children who are doing remarkable things locally and around the world. Would you be interested in being interviewed?

SEND AN EMAIL to City Clerk, Deborah Padovan at dpadovan@losaltoshills.ca.gov

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

The city manager's report will return in the March 2020 issue. If you are interested in learning about what is happening in town on a regular basis, you can sign up to get the city manager's weekly report. Please visit: www.losaltoshills.ca.gov/list.aspx.

In October, Pam's Yoga Fitness celebrated the 14th anniversary of ongoing classes with Los Altos Hills Parks and Recreation. This makes Yoga Fitness the longest continuously running recreation class in town. First offered in 2005, the year of the Town Hall renovation, the class has steadily gained momentum and now consistently fills the council chambers on Wednesday mornings.

PAM'S YOGA FITNESS CELEBRATES 14 YEARS

More than a few students have attended from the very beginning. 14-year yoga veteran Carol Commons shares, "Pam's teaching style is unique because she never makes you feel you are not doing something

right. She urges us to listen to our bodies while getting a good stretch. I leave class feeling good and I always want to return to Pam's Yoga." The class focuses on awareness of breathing while doing hip-opening poses, shoulder-opening poses, and ab-strengthening exercises. Pam does not make corrections, as she encourages students to follow the wisdom of their own bodies.



One might not have assumed the council chambers could double as a yoga studio, but Pam's Yoga Fitness has found the space to be well-suited to hold their practice. In fact, Pam believes the council chambers contributes greatly to the success of the class. "Yoga students enjoy practicing in fresh air with natural light and architectural excellence. Several students walk to class, extending their workout, and enjoying the convenience of the proximity." Town Hall is conveniently located for residents and draws students from nearby Los Altos, Stanford, and Portola Valley.

The teacher, Pam Walatka, began teaching yoga half a century ago at Esalen in Big Sur. Pam holds a rare achievement of being the only person to have been a Peace Corps Volunteer, a Resident Fellow at Esalen, and contractor at NASA. Pam's background is philosophy studies at UC Berkeley. Her original routine, which predates brand-name yoga, has been evolving since 1969, and the "rough edges have been rubbed off." Pam lived in town for 32 years; her daughter attended Bullis Purissima Elementary School. She now divides her time between yoga and babysitting her granddaughter.

So if you are looking for a relaxed class with occasional chuckles, please consider attending Pam's Yoga Fitness.



Bringing Town Teens Together

The Los Altos Hills Youth Commission (LAHYC) is an organization of teenagers who are interested in civic engagement and providing youth representation in local government. Youth commissioners volunteer at town events, like the Town Picnic, Hoedown, Barn Lighting, and the Pathways Run/Walk. The Youth Commission also makes an annual presentation to the town council to report on their work. Most recently, in their mission to provide teenagers' voice in town affairs, the LAHYC

offered input in review of a possible Town Hall renovation.

Each year the members of the LAHYC hold an election to determine various leadership positions. The LAHYC holds meetings twice a month on the first and third Tuesdays from 7:00 to 8:00 pm in the Parks and Recreation Building at Town Hall.

The LAHYC provides teenagers who live in town a great opportunity to develop social and leadership skills as well as to earn coveted volunteer/service hours. LAHYC co-chair Serena Theobald

explained, "The Youth Commission has showed me the importance of teamwork and allowed me to become friends with other kids who live in Los Altos Hills." LAHYC alumni have reported that experience with the organization, combined with their community service hours and letters of recommendation from town staff have strengthened their college applications. Some have enjoyed the experience so much, that they have stayed engaged longer. "I joined the LAHYC to meet other people in a community that is often undervalued," said Jai Bahri, LAHYC co-chair, "and I've stayed on for the past six years to help other members do the same."

The LAHYC welcomes any teenager to get involved. To qualify, the student must be a Los Altos Hills resident between 6th and 12th grade, have attended one LAHYC meeting, and volunteered at one community event. Currently, the 2019–2020 LAHYC has five open seats. To learn more visit losaltoshills.ca.gov/168/Youth-Commission or contact staff liaison Chris Knopf at cknopf@losaltoshills.ca.gov.

Upcoming Youth Commission Events

The LAHYC's signature event is the annual Leadership Conference. The conference hosts local leaders to share their stories and offer valuable leadership advice. Past topics have included civic leadership, environmental stewardship, and preparing for careers in technology. The Leadership Conference is open to all members of the community, especially young people. To learn more or to get involved with the conference email Chris Knopf at cknopf@losaltoshills.ca.gov

A new addition this year is that the LAHYC will be partnering the neighboring Los Altos Youth Commission to organize a Teen Movie Night. Both groups will work together to plan, market, and host the event which will be held in the Los Altos Hills Council Chambers on Friday, February 7 from 7:00 – 9:00 pm. The event will serve as a great opportunity for local youth to socialize and enjoy a movie together.

Russell Yang is Vice-Chair of External Affairs

A town is shaped, in large measure, by the people who live there. Los Altos Hills is home to innovators and pioneers in the area of politics, technology, business, medicine, philanthropy, the arts, and environment, among others. The profile page of *Our Town* features some of these residents who, through their unique talents, spirit, and efforts, make Los Altos Hills a vibrant and fascinating community.

ROGER SUMMIT

Roger Summit has lived in Los Altos Hills with his wife, Ginger, for more than 50 years. He was recently honored with the prestigious IEEE Milestone Award in Electrical Engineering and Computing for his development of DIALOG, a precursor to the Internet. This is Part 1 of a two part interview.

Tell us about your college education.

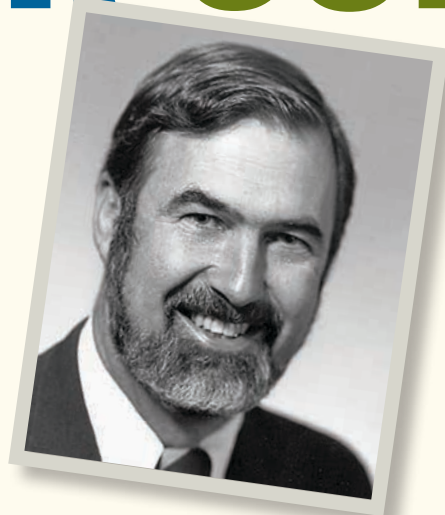
My university education was facilitated by two years of high school spent at Cranbrook School in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, a private, college prep boarding school where I learned how to study. In 1948 I was fortunate enough to win an Naval ROTC scholarship, that allowed me to select Stanford University for my undergraduate college education. Having grown up in Dearborn, Michigan, when I arrived at Stanford in the fall of 1948, I felt a sense of rebirth. I just loved it and hoped to stay forever. Ultimately I earned a bachelor's in psychology, a master's in business administration, and a doctorate in management science — all from Stanford University.

What got you interested in your field?

During the last part of my undergraduate years, about 1947, I became aware of the digital computer. Through my studies in psychology, I saw that computers could do marvelous things. Being able to modify a program during the course of the computation based upon external inputs and interim computer results sounded a little like how the human brain operates and I knew it was something I wanted to pursue further.

Did you have any mentors that helped shape your career?

Most of my mentoring came in the Stanford MBA classes. In 1956 Stanford obtained an IBM 650 computer and



offered an early class in programming taught by Professor Robert Oakford. In the class, we began thinking of practical applications for computers, such as use of computers for point of sale transactions in retail stores, inventory control with feedback from sales information, processing literature in response to queries to find needed information, and being able to identify homes of interest from real estate listings.

Other mentors included statistics professor, William Spurr, economics professor Theodore Kreps, and later during my Ph.D. studies, Daniel Teichroew. At Lockheed, my early mentor was E. K. Fisher, Director of Information Processing, Lockheed Missiles and Space Co.

What is the best career advice you ever received?

Dr. Goldberg, a physician friend of our family who also was heavily involved in finance and entrepreneurship said, "Roger, if you have an interest in a field, delve into it as deeply as possible. Go from a descriptive understanding to a fundamentally analytical understanding.. Go below the top level, get down to the nuts and bolts

and study and work with it until you know it completely."

At what point did you move to town?

My attraction to the area began with my arrival at Stanford as an undergraduate. At that time I had no idea that I might be able to continue living in the area as employment at the time focused mainly on agriculture. But as time passed, the transformational power of Stanford Industrial Park brought about the Silicon Valley with no end of employment opportunity.

Tell us about your family.

I was born in 1930 in Detroit, Michigan and grew up in Dearborn, Michigan, where both my parents were teachers. My father was also a guidance counselor and earlier in life, had played piano and organ for silent films.

I met Ginger (pictured below) at Stanford in 1962 and we married in 1964. We purchased a home in Los Altos Hills in 1966 and still live there although it has undergone substantial remodeling.

Our kids, Jennifer and Scott attended Pinewood. Following several years on the Stanford faculty and as head of the English Department, Jennifer is now Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs at San Francisco State University. Scott



co-founded a company, Bespoke Innovations, specializing in 3D-printed medical devices. The company was purchased by 3D Systems. His new company, Ethereal Matter, is involved in the application of virtual reality to medical devices as described on his website, www.summitid.com. After retiring from teaching special education, Ginger has participated in many veins of town activities, including serving a term on the City Council. She has authored eight books and continues with art as well as community activities

When you were a doctoral candidate at Stanford in 1960, you took a summer job at Lockheed Missiles and Space Co. Tell us about those early years at Lockheed.

In June 1960, after passing the orals for my doctorate but before the dissertation, I took a summer internship in Sunnyvale at Lockheed Missiles and Space Corporation and was assigned to the staff of the Director of Information Processing, E. K. Fisher. In

"I saw the potential for computer-based information retrieval systems ultimately changing the nature of research. My interest was in developing a system that would allow a person to use a computer directly to access reference publications to find answers to their questions."

discussing with Fisher my summer activities, we honed in on computer simulation and information retrieval.

My first efforts were in computer simulation. Business games were popular in the early 1960s. I didn't like the ones that were around, so I decided to design and program a model that would behave more like real life — my psychology background came into play here. The model I programmed, called The Aerospace Business Environment Simulator (ABES), is a computer-based business game that allows management teams to compete through bidding on contracts, receiving awards, hiring and firing employees, setting pay scales, and the like. I received a Lockheed Special Invention Award for the development. I also taught classes in



Summit standing amid the Dialog data facility, located in the Stanford Industrial Park, containing information from over 200,000 publications, 12 million companies, 6 million patents, and 9 million chemical substances.

management decision-making using the model at Lockheed and San Jose State in 1963.

You worked on a groundbreaking project called DIALOG that began in the late 1960s. Could you elaborate?

Prior to about 1972, scientists, engineers, attorneys and research librarians needed to hand review/search in a time-consuming manner published hard-copy and patent literature to learn what was already known and published. A comment I heard from a scientist at Lockheed at the time was, "It's often easier to redo research than to find if it's already been done." I saw the potential for computer-based information retrieval systems ultimately changing the nature of research. My interest was in developing a system that would allow a person to use a computer directly to access reference publications to find answers to their questions. There were at the time publications that abstracted published literature, such as *Chemical Abstracts*, *Psychological Abstracts* and the like, that were gradually being converted from printed to computer-readable databases. If we could put these databases on a computer and design a search language that would provide the searcher needed answers, that should be a very worthwhile endeavor. After all, what good is knowledge if you cannot find it?

To facilitate this and other efforts, Lockheed formed the Information

Sciences Laboratory in 1964 with one of the first IBM 360 computers available, an IBM 360/30 with 32K bytes of internal memory, called Core memory at the time. The mission of the lab was to examine how third-generation computer hardware could be applied to computing in the information sciences. Third-generation hardware typified by the IBM 360 computer introduced for the first time a computer that integrated mass random access storage, remotely controlled processing, telecommunications, and a time-sharing operation that allowed many people to utilize the computer at the same time. I submitted a proposal to Lockheed to further explore and develop this search technology and was given responsibility for information retrieval.

We set up a team of five full-time programmers. By 1965 we had developed a working prototype of a system we named DIALOG and sought to have the prototype tested in a real situation using NASA's massive database of technical report citations called STAR. Based on our prototype DIALOG system, we responded to a request for proposal and won a contract from NASA to develop a system they called RECON that would service multiple NASA facilities and allow NASA personnel to search multiple databases. All programming was done in basic assembly language (BAL). Interestingly, even the smallest modern iPhone has more internal memory than the entire IBM 360 system had available.

Interview to be continued in the March 2020 issue.

THE Mischievous Trash Panda

The raccoon is native to North America and lives throughout most of the U.S. Originally a forest-dweller, raccoons have adapted to urban areas that provide similar habitat structure. In nature, raccoons den in tree hollows and travel in the cover of dark. As their natural habitat became urbanized, they adapted by denning in vehicles, crawl spaces, attics, barns and sheds, and traveling through storm drains. Because they eat anything, urbanization has not adversely impacted them. In fact, it has brought these opportunists an abundance of food and more places to exploit as dens.

What's in a Name?

Linnaeus originally put the raccoon in the bear family, first naming it *Ursus cauda elongate* (long-tailed bear), then *Ursus lotor* (washer bear), and in fact the bear family and the raccoon family are closely related. In 1780, Storr created a separate genus for the raccoon, *Procyon*, meaning dog-like. The current scientific name for the raccoon is *Procyon lotor*, "before-dog washer." *Procyon* is also the brightest object in the constellation Canis Minor, and usually one of the brightest stars in the night sky. The common name raccoon comes from the Colony of Virginia, based on a native Powhatan word for "animal that scratches with its hands." It is related to ringtails, coatis, and red pandas.

Skillful Dexterity

Raccoons have five toes on their front paws, one of which is almost like a thumb, and they are incredibly dexterous. They can grab, pull, twist, turn, and pry until they get their quarry, whether it's getting into a garbage can, ripping off shingles to get into the attic, or reaching into a bird's nest for eggs. There are four to five times more sensory cells in their paws than most mammals, and a large portion of the sensory area of their brain is devoted to touch. That sensitivity increases under water, which may be why raccoons wash their food, but it also helps them catch favored aquatic prey that is hard to see: clams, crayfish, frogs, fish, and snails. They also eat insects, slugs, dead animals, birds, bird eggs, small mammals, fruit, vegetables, nuts, seeds, garbage, and pet food, earning them the contemporary nickname of "trash panda."

Raccoons can weigh in excess of 20 pounds. Despite having a lumbering gait, attributed to hind legs that are longer than the front legs, they can reach a speed of 15 miles per hour. They are excellent climbers and swimmers. The dark mask, which grows in by ten days of age, is thought to reduce glare and enhance night vision, but it may also help raccoons recognize each other.



Raccoons are both solitary and social. At night they roam a wide territory, usually in search of food, and their territories overlap. They use multiple dens. They communicate with hisses, whistles, screams, growls, and snarls. The male is called a boar, the female a sow, and the young are kits. A group of raccoons is usually called a "nursery," as it is typically a sow and her kits, but is also called a "gaze." The mating season is January-June; gestation is about nine weeks, and a typical litter is three to four kits. Females start breeding at one year. The young will remain with the family group for about a year, then will strike out on their own, sometimes socializing with other raccoons of the same gender. In nature the life span is two to three years, but they have lived 20 years in captivity. Predators include cougar, bobcat, coyote, and fox; cars also cause mortality.

Protecting Garbage Cans

If you have a problem with raccoons getting into the garbage, you can spray a repellent on the garbage bags, or secure your garbage cans in a structure. If they are in your home, they don't like light, odd noises, ammonia, or mothballs and can be encouraged to leave by lighting up their den, playing a radio nearby, and/or putting a dish of ammonia, ammonia-soaked rags, or mothballs in the area. Be sure to secure the opening they got into immediately once they leave. Don't leave food outside that will encourage them to hang around, lock the pet door at night (although they can still break in), and think about how you store pet food. They have excellent memories, so don't assume that they will forget where to find the food.

Prevalence

Raccoons, and other wildlife, may seem more abundant in Los Altos Hills this year because we had a good rainy season last year. Habitats responded with more lush growth and fruits, which in turn supported more insects, rodents, birds, etc. on up the food chain. With their dexterous paws, multiple talents, and adaptability it seems raccoons will be in our hills well into the future.

Taylor Vanderlip is an environmental consultant specializing in biological issues.



Look Up!

Those who stroll through Edith Park will notice some new residents there: a flock of ceramic birds perched on the trunks of two redwood trees at the eastern end of the park, across from the wooden bench. The five ceramic birds, three woodpeckers and two nuthatches, are art pieces created by artist Sally Diggory (Aromas, CA) for the Los Altos Hills Public Art Committee (LAH PAC). The birds were installed in September. The committee proposed the cheerful, nature-themed art to welcome visitors at one of the entrances to town. Edith Park is located at the corner of W. Edith Avenue and Fremont Road.

Diggory has been working in clay for 35 years. Drawn to clay's sculptural and functional possibilities, she began by taking ceramics classes at various community colleges, followed by taking sculpture classes at the Mendocino Art Center. Diggory also enjoys gardening and creates outdoor art that includes animals, flowers, faces, and planters in various sizes, shapes and glazes. She has made many ceramic birds in the past, including ones that have been showcased at Pajaro Art Center exhibits.

For the town's art installation — titled "LOOK UP!" — Diggory created her first cluster of birds. "When they see the birds," she said, "I hope people will be surprised and have a laugh."

The ceramic birds installation was made possible by a generous donation. Members of the Town Council, the Parks and Recreation Committee, several other open space and ecologically-oriented committees, and Public Works were engaged in the approval, commissioning, and installation of the art.

The art committee identifies, acquires, and installs art on town lands to draw attention to the town's natural beauty. The committee also produces the online Digital Gallery of fine art that features work by Los Altos Hills artists. For more information about the committee, or to explore membership, contact: committeepublicart@gmail.com, or go online to: www.LosAltosHills.ca.gov/PublicArt.

Robyn Aber is a member of the Los Altos Hills Public Art Committee.



LIFESTYLE MEDICINE

*Making Better Choices
for a Better Life*

Lifestyle medicine at El Camino Health uses prescribed lifestyle changes to treat, prevent, and often reverse many diseases and health problems.

A healthy lifestyle can help one live longer — and better. But what exactly is a healthy lifestyle? Does it mean the same thing for everyone? How do the choices someone makes every day affect their health now and for years to come?

A new medical specialty called lifestyle medicine can help answer these questions and guide the changes needed to improve health, manage or eliminate chronic conditions, reduce the need for medications and live a healthier life.

Lifestyle medicine physicians and experts can show individuals how it's possible to treat, prevent, and often reverse many diseases and health problems with personalized lifestyle changes. They don't just say lose weight, get more sleep or be more active. They work with the individual to clinically manage changes that become part of their life, and provide coaching and support to keep one motivated and strong.

"Many people don't fully realize the power of their choices," says Catherine Collings, MD, a cardiologist who is now leading the lifestyle medicine program at El Camino Health. "Your choices can often be more powerful than genetics or other risk factors in determining not only how long you might live but how you feel every day. When you understand this and start to successfully create new habits, you start to be able to imagine a life with less dependence on medication, with more energy and more control of any chronic conditions you might already have. And with many of us paying a larger percentage of our healthcare costs than in years past, realizing your own role in improving your health can be freeing instead of feeling like more responsibility."

Overcoming Misinformation with Science

With today's communications technology and culture, it seems people are being bombarded with information — and misinformation — from every direction. With celebrities endorsing fad diets and meal plans, the easy access to the internet and talk shows featuring celebrity doctors who make



millions off of sponsorships and self-help books, how can someone know what is true and what is right for them?

With lifestyle medicine, there is no wonder. The recommendations and coaching approach are based on scientific research and data, and have been proven successful. There are no gimmicks or expensive products to buy. Specific steps are uniquely prescribed based on an individual's needs, environment and life. So finally there is a path to success that is charted specific to the individual.

Lifestyle medicine has been shown to help prevent, manage and often reverse many common chronic conditions that can be life-threatening, including:

- Type II diabetes
- Prediabetes and metabolic syndrome
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Unhealthy weight
- Cancer recurrence
- Fatty liver.

A Foundation to Build On

The six pillars of lifestyle medicine, identified and honed through years of research and application, include:

- Healthful eating of whole, plant-based foods and lean protein
- Increasing physical activity
- Improving sleep

- Forming and maintaining relationships
- Managing stress with healthy coping strategies
- Cessation of tobacco use and other unhealthy habits.

"We build on this foundation to create a clinically managed personalized plan for each patient," Dr. Collings explains. "It starts with a consultation and assessment with me, as well as a session with our lifestyle medicine coach. You don't need to change primary care physicians, as this program can work with what you're doing now, including medication or other measures your doctor has prescribed."

An assessment and initial personalized coaching session will lead to one of two tracks: the individualized Advanced Lifestyle Medicine Program or the group-based Complete Health Improvement Program. Both programs are several weeks long and provide support and tools to help participants succeed, from biometrics and progress tracking to coaching and cooking demonstrations. Participants will have all the pieces needed to make better life choices every day and create lasting change.

The Bigger Picture

Lifestyle medicine is about individual choices, but it may also help shape medical education and practice in years to come. The American College

of Lifestyle Medicine (Dr. Collings is president-elect) is already offering curriculum for physicians and other healthcare professionals, and aims to make the lifestyle medicine approach part of medical education for all physicians.

"Most doctors received training that focused on diagnosing medical conditions and prescribing interventions, such as medication and surgery, to manage or treat diseases and injuries or to reduce symptoms and complications," says Dr. Collings. "That's all critical — but we need an increased focus on lifestyle and helping patients to actually live a healthier life. Not only could we reduce suffering and extend years of life without disability, we could help reduce the financial burden healthcare is placing on us all and on future generations. We're trying to create a new mindset and put the 'health' back into healthcare where it's desperately needed. I'm proud to be leading this initiative for El Camino Health, and I've got a new sense of optimism. I know I can help my patients through lifestyle medicine, and I feel we're laying some very important groundwork that could greatly benefit future generations. We're just getting started — and we're already making a difference in thousands of lives."

Make a choice today that can lead to a healthier tomorrow. With two convenient office locations in Mountain View (El Camino Health Primary Care, 2490 Hospital Drive Suite 212, Mountain View, CA 94040) and San Jose (El Camino Health First Street, 4150 N. First Street, San Jose, CA 95134), call 650-962-4392 or email lifestyle-medicine@elcaminohealth.org to make an appointment.

To Learn More

Find out more about lifestyle medicine at elcaminohealth.org/lifestylemedicine.



TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS
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Town Newsletter Statement of Purpose

This is the official town newsletter to communicate current issues, services, and activities in Los Altos Hills to the residents of the town — to facilitate, encourage, and improve interaction between the residents and the town government. The newsletter is published quarterly. **Deadline for the next issue is January 6, 2020.**

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www.losaltoshills.ca.gov

Our Town

Our Town is published with assistance from the City Clerk, Deborah Padovan, and Town Volunteer Committees.

Editor: Alexander Atkins

Contributing Writers: Robyn Aber, Taylor Vanderlip, Roy Woolsey, Russell Yang

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Los Altos Hills City Council

Roger Spreen, Mayor
Michelle Wu, Vice Mayor
Courtenay Corrigan
Kavita Tankha
George Tyson

City Manager

Carl Cahill

CALENDAR



DEC 8

Sun., 2:00 - 5:00 pm
Holiday Barn Lighting
Westwind Community Barn will be lit for the holiday season. Crafts, pony rides, petting zoo, Model A cars, Santa and caroling fun. Questions contact, 650-947-2518.

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Wed., 7:30 - 9:00 pm
Caroling in the Hills
Join your neighbors and bring the holiday cheer to the neighborhood. Meet at

Town Hall council chambers to warm your voices, and enjoy cookies and warm beverages before heading out. For more information contact Scott Vanderlip 650-948-6455.

JAN 1

Wed., 1:00 pm
New Year's Day Hike/Walk
Join the Pathways Committee on a walk starting at Foothill College Parking Lot 1, by the football field. Parking is free and multiple loops of varying distance will be available.

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Wed., 6:00-7:30 pm
**Hands Only CPR/
AED Class**
Free Santa Clara County Fire course, register here: www.HOCPRLAHJan2020.eventbrite.com.



FEB 7

Fri., 7:00 -9:00 pm
Teen Movie Night
Hosted by the Los Altos Hills Youth Commission at Town Hall, bring your own pillow and blanket and get cozy in the council chambers. For more information contact: lahyouthcommission@gmail.com.

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Thu., 10:00 am -12:30 pm
**Stay Active, Stay Safe,
Stay for Lunch**
Join us for a gentle two-mile walk at 10:00 am. At 11:00 am, Santa Clara County Fire will present "Preparing Caregivers for Home Emergencies," followed by lunch from LeBoulanger. RSVP www.losaltoshills.ca.gov or call 650-947-2518.

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Sat., 10:00am -12:00 pm
Compost Basics
Learn about the importance of managing your organic waste at home. For more information visit: www.ucanr.edu/compost.

Calendar events are also posted on town's website: www.losaltoshills.ca.gov